treated in the same manner; for though the lower parts of their doorways, with the angular pedestals that flank them, are covered to a considerable height with most delicate bas-reliefs, they are only the decorations to these principal features, and are abundantly contrasted by space of plain surface above and around, by means of which not one of the well-studied and exquisite mouldings, and other enrichments, is lost in the general effect. In the works of the later Gothic, however, the carving is not so judiciously confined to the principal parts, but often covers the whole of the walling, as on the apse of the church of St. Sauvern, at Caen. In our northern climate, where it is, in general, impracticable to decorate these spaces with colour, it may be expedient at times to give reins to the fancy of the artist, and to trust to the sunshine to gild the projections, and to the mist to flush the recesses with purple, and by the mere force of fretted wall and carved work, to strike awe into the minds of men. But in such cases, the sculpture will have exceeded the limits of its due subordination; and this excess can only be tolerated where it arises from fulness of thought and an ungrudging spirit, conscious that much of its work will be lost, and that it must be less effective in proportion to its quantity—and not if it consist in the mere repetition of the same details, the last resource of poverty of invention, as is too often the case with our English Perpendicular buildings, or in that niggard endeavour, which is the very incarnation of the spirit of modern times, namely, produce the greatest effect with the least expenditure of thought or means.

Then the place for colour is on the flat surfaces, the walls, the windows, the bays of the vaulting, the pavements, &c., whether we give them over as a blank page to the painter, which it were well often to do, or whether we are content to cover them with quaint patterns and mottled figures. Such principal members in the construction, as shafts, vaulting ribs, or those which depend upon the grace of their form, as mouldings, ought to be comparatively simple, without much vivid colouring: certainly they never should be striped with lines running in a vertical direction, which destroy all their breadth, and cannot be supported by any authority in nature: lines crossing them, as those used in the decorations of St. Germain de Près at Paris, will better develope their form: zigzag lines running up them, as seen in the Cathedral of St. Denis, give the uncomfortable idea of their being elastic. However, in all these systems the effect is somewhat confused, and these important members are not made sufficiently prominent or detached from the surface of the walls: the more natural method, as in the stems of plants or trunks of trees, is to keep them of a single colour, which is best effected by the use of marbles; for instance, by the Purbeck marble shafts in the Early English Gothic, as in the choir at Ely Cathedral. They might, perhaps, have their colour gradated as they rise, or divided into ribs, like trees into branches, such as that exquisite painting of the mountain birch in autumn, whose slender stem gleams amid the then deep russet woods, a line of silver grey, sprayed into ebon twigs, all showered with beads of gold.

Nor should the colouring be allowed to interfere with the sculpture any more than with the architecture, for its modelling and delicacy is seen best, or rather seen only, when left in pure marble or stone. I know nothing that so immediately renders common the finest carved work than to gild it as has been done in the choir of Lisieux Cathedral, and partially in the chapter-house of York, or to daub it with colour, as in many of the churches of Caen, where the noble foliage of the Early Gothic and the richer Flamboyant alike seem as if just brought from a *papier maché* shop. The ground of the ornament might, however, be toned with colour judiciously, to relieve better the design when it is far removed from the eye.

In the treatment of colour, it too often happens that attention is bestowed only upon the individual harmony of separate portions or patterns; whereas, for general effect, the colour should be brought to a focus in one point, and the rest, as it were, toned up to it: painted glass, by its peculiar brilliancy, or some richly coloured screen, altar, or other feature, would supply readily the means of effecting this, and it will be found that greater power will be gained thus, than if equal richness, or colours of equal brilliancy, were carried over the whole buildings.

With regard to this part of the question, however, I cannot do better than call attention to the following principles which have been given by Mr. Ruskin, in his "Lamp of Beauty," which, as indeed the whole of his observations upon the application of colour to architecture, are *most practically useful*:—

"That colour should be independent of form and arranged upon a separate system: whatever harmonies there may be, should resemble those of two separate musical parts, coinciding here and there only,—never discordant, but essentially different.

"That in the arrangement of colour, the patterns should be somewhat quaint and irregular, and that the refinement of line and form, necessary in sculpture, is wrong in these: they should be confined rather to simple masses, zones, cloudings, flamings, or spots."

The following remarks, too, by Mr. J. K. Colling, in his "Gothic Ornaments," are valuable. "That in the most harmonious combinations of colour in the Gothic style (as in heraldry), colour is never placed upon colour, but should always be separated by either black, white, or gold." This principle will also be found to be carried out in the ornaments of the Alhambra. I have observed lately, that where the most vivid colours are used in the objects of nature, as on the wings of butterflies, this principle may be observed to be carried out; but that where the tones are broken, they are sometimes found in juxta-position, as on the wings of some kinds of moths. A certain confusion appears to arise in either case, the effect of which is only disagreeable when the colours are brilliant.

JOHN P. SEDDON.

HARMONIES OF COLOUR IN ORNAMENTAL DESIGNS.

A LECTURE on this subject was delivered by Mr. R. Wornum at the Central School of Design on 7th inst., in completion of his course on "The History and Principles of Ornament."

The lecturer first explained to the pupils the analytical nature of colour according to the received theory, and then proceeded to consider the laws of its harmonies. The elementary facts, he continued, we may, or perhaps ought to, suffer ourselves to be guided by, in our general principles of decoration: we are taught them not only by scientific analysis, but by the general appearances of natural bodies also. We find in nature that the principal effect is that of light: that is the general aspect: separate the parts and we find vast harmonies of the tertiary colours: these again are interspersed with arrangements of the secondaries, and the whole is decorated with minute portions of primitive colour, such as flowers and the smaller receptacles of animal life. The primary colours are essentially in nature peculiar to minutiæ or the finest details. Neither man nor animals of any comparatively large size exhibit much colour. Now, from this general view I should deduce the following theory of colour in decorative or ornamental art.

All colours are enhanced by black and white as the two extreme contrasts; but to introduce black in any large quantities would be inconsistent with nature: on the other hand, white may enter largely into all ornamental schemes, and at least in the modified form of some light tint, should perhaps be the basis of every extensive combination. For the general compartments of a design also, secondary and tertiary tints are the most valuable; the degree of colour depending a great deal upon the size of the compartments,—that is, whether it should be an absolute colour, or only a tint: the smaller the compartment, the more intense or decided should be your colour, the colour being inversely as the extent of surface. The same rule would hold, of course, with the general grounds of designs for manufactures, except where the manufacture is of a purely ornamental character, as a ribbon, for instance, which is always designed as accessory to something else; and in this case there cannot be any objection to the primaries even in a positive degree. But as a general rule the primaries are objectionable as grounds of designs, and where two colours only are introduced and one of them a primary, the larger surface should always be given to its complementary secondary, if we wish to produce the best possible effect of the combination. This restriction to secondary and tertiary tints for the general masses is a very trifling limitation; you have the choice of a thousand tints, from a rich orange green or purple to the most delicate marine, drab, or gray: you leave also a far greater scope for effect in the introduction of the ornamental details of your pattern, and it is here that you have the proper office for the primaries and secondaries in all the depth of their prismatic brilliancy. I think we should be careful even how we use the secondaries in their intensity, for anything more than the ornamental details. Modify them by white and you change their character: they are then, perhaps, of all colours the most fit for grounds or small masses. Even the primaries, when greatly modified by white, whether by actual mixture or mere juxta-position, may be applied to the same uses; but in their genuine intensity they are extremely objectionable in large masses. I believe we could not tolerate even a red, blue, or yellow paper, if the surface were not broken by some colonnade or diaper work, in a different tint or colour, so as to destroy the monotonous intensity: variety of colour is quite as necessary as variety of form, and the more necessary the more positive it is, because it acts with a greater stress upon the eye. The value of this breaking of the surface where the colour is strong is admirably shown in the decorations of the Alhambra, where we have such an interlacing of colours, that though the primaries are generally employed, they are so small in their masses and so intermingled as to have only a general effect of the secondaries; a result which in the strong light of Spain must amount almost to a necessity. The Moors and Saracens in Spain and in Sicily have shown remarkable judgment in the application of their high colouring, a taste for which appears to be a common characteristic of people accustomed to southern developments of colour in nature, and whose taste for colour is very superior to that in the north, as, till lately, developed in this island, which, for a century or so, seems to have amounted to a kind of drabomania both in decoration and costume. It is still too much the fashion to consider a taste for colour as puerile: it can only be so when in violation of nature's harmonies. I believe æsthetically a judicious application or employment of colour to be highly beneficial to the mind, in imparting a sympathetic gaiety to the current of the thoughts, and in contributing to cheerfulness of disposition.

The lecturer then entered more particularly into the subject of taste in costume, so far as regards colours, and their harmonies,—the colours best adapted to male and female attire,—the effect of mere colour and its harmonies and contrasts in rendering the military popular,—the influence of colour in the sustainment of royalty and nobility,—the gorgeous groupings of colour in the House of Lords on some occasions, &c. &c. The very contempt, or ridicule, or humour, excited by peculiar associations, or by want of proper harmonies, in colour, he thinks, only proves its paramount importance; and there is, he believes, far more in scarlet and purple than is dreamed of by philosophers. The more perfect the combinations of colour, of course the more impressive will be the effect; and the student cannot form an exaggerated notion of the value of the true harmonies, which are not matters of artistic convention, but the simple lessons of nature. This the lecturer illustrated by a rapid view of the most ordinary and the most prominent chromatic appearances of organic or inorganic creation, but into these we cannot follow him.

"If then," he continued, "the organic as well

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